

Brookhaven Receives Long Island Sound Futures Fund Grant Award for Project to Protect Water Quality in LI Sound

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Farmingville, NY – Brookhaven Town Supervisor Ed Romaine was joined by Councilwoman Jane Bonner and Councilwoman Valerie M. Cartright in announcing that the Town has been chosen as one of 25 Long Island Sound Futures Fund Grant recipients. The grant is awarded for conservation and environmental quality projects in New York and Connecticut focused on protection and restoration of the Long Island Sound. The \$86,429 grant was awarded to the Town, together with its proposal partners, Peconic Green Growth and the New York State Center for Clean Water Technology at Stony Brook University.

The Futures Fund grant program is managed by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, partnering with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Long Island Sound Study, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Supervisor Ed Romaine said, "Because we live on an island, water quality must be a priority, now and in the future. Nitrogen loaded into the ground eventually ends up in our waterways and ground water and it has to stop. This grant is a significant step to help preserve and protect the Long Island Sound, as well as our aquifer before it's too late."

Brookhaven's project will test a new technology for removing nitrogen and other contaminants from onsite wastewater at the Robert Reid Recreation Center in Shoreham. The new treatment system, known as a Nitrogen Reducing Biofilter (NRB), will be a part of a series of pilot installations designed to demonstrate the performance capability of the technology in a range of conditions, a process that will allow the Suffolk County Department of Health Services to evaluate its potential as a tool for combating the nitrogen problem in critical watershed areas.

Mitigating nitrogen loading to the Long Island Sound has been and continues to be a major focus of the Long Island Sound watershed improvements. Excess nitrogen contributes to the occurrence of toxic algal blooms, oxygen depleted waters and the depletion of shell and finfish populations. It also weakens marshes, which are critical ecologically and act as wave barriers that add resiliency to our coastlines. On Long Island and particularly in Suffolk County, this will require replacing existing cesspools and septic systems with treatment technologies that remove nitrogen and other contaminants, in certain areas.

NRB installations have demonstrated the ability to reduce nitrogen being discharged to groundwater and surface waters by 85-90 percent, as well as an ability to efficiently remove pharmaceuticals and personal care products, contaminants which pose a growing concern regarding water quality. The treatment approach is the subject of an extensive White Paper prepared by the New York State Center for Clean Water Technology, which details its potential as a high performance, affordable solution for enhanced onsite wastewater treatment.

The Robert Reid Center has a full capacity of 213 people with actual use estimated at 114 people per day. A person produces 7 pounds of nitrogen per year estimated after preliminary treatment in a septic tank (9 lb. /day direct), which is estimated at 798 pounds of Total Nitrogen. Since this facility is operable for eight hours per day, it is estimated that approximately 266 pounds of Total Nitrogen is produced annually at the facility. At a 90% reduction, this one project could remove up to 234 pounds of nitrogen per year when fully used

This project has even more value, for if accepted as a viable treatment option, onsite wastewater may be treated to levels of quality only previously available at sewage treatment plans. The cost is also considerably lower, with less energy use and reduced collection infrastructure.

Councilwoman Jane Bonner said, "A healthy Long Island Sound is vital to our North Shore economy, recreation and environment, and protecting it needs to be a group effort. I thank the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for awarding this grant to the Town."

Councilman Dan Panico said, "As residents of an island, our waterways are directly tied to our environment, our

economy and our quality of life. The sound, our bays and local estuaries are treasures that should be protected and cleaned for future generations, and this grant will go a long way in helping the Town of Brookhaven deliver cleaner bodies of water to its residents."

Councilwoman Valerie M. Cartright said, "I am grateful that we will be able to use the award from Long Island Sound Futures Fund to reduce nitrogen in our waters in Shoreham, and that Port Jefferson will benefit from funding for programs to educate our residents on protecting our precious waterways. Thank you to all of those involved in the application process for the LISFF grant and to LISFF for helping Brookhaven to protect and restore our coast."

"The opportunity to partner with Brookhaven Town and Peconic Green Growth to secure federal funding is an ideal way to demonstrate the potential of a new technology, and to maximize the resources of our Center through cost and information sharing. Collaborations like this one are a great example of the partnerships that will accelerate our ability as a region to evaluate and implement solutions that will restore local water quality," said Jennifer Garvey, Associate Director, New York State Center for Clean Water Technology at Stony Brook University.

"This project will help test and develop innovative and practical technologies to reduce nitrogen pollution on Long Island," said Mark Tedesco, Director of the Environmental Protection Agency's Long Island Sound Office. "The partnership among Peconic Green Growth, Suffolk County, the Town of Brookhaven, and Stony Brook University is to be commended."

Enrico Nardone, Director of the Seatuck Environmental Association said, "The deleterious impacts of excess nitrogen in our waterways is well understood - from dangerous algal blooms to lost eelgrass to degraded saltmarshes, it poses a serious threat to the overall health of our coastal ecosystem. Getting nitrogen inputs under control is one of the great environmental challenges of our time. Seatuck commends the Town of Brookhaven for their leadership on this important issue. The Shoreham pilot project will help ready valuable new technology for use in addressing the nitrogen problem."

Kevin McAllister, President of Defend H2O said, "As a longtime advocate for the use of denitrification systems with on-site sewage disposal, Brookhaven Town has once again demonstrated leadership by incorporating an advanced system in a town facility. This initiative sets the stage for the other municipalities to follow suit and serves as a catalyst for bringing innovation to the forefront."

[Click here to see a video of the press conference.](#)

Pictured left to right are Councilwoman Valerie M. Cartright; Anthony Graves, Brookhaven Town Chief Environmental Analyst; Councilwoman Jane Bonner; Glynis M. Berry, Executive Director, Peconic Green Growth; Jennifer Garvey, Associate Director, New York State Center for Clean Water Technology at Stony Brook University; Chris Clapp, Marine Scientist, The Nature Conservancy and Supervisor Ed Romaine.

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